

population data at the parish level, information such as the city or community census data "would be more appropriate in this case."

Although the EPA made these comments, the NRC did not change the text of the final EIS. The EPA has been criticized for not taking further action against the statement.

Critics say that the EPA should have referred the EIS to the White House Council on Environmental Quality for review. The CEQ oversees federal NEPA compliance. Under NEPA regulations, the EPA has 25 days from the issuance of a final EIS to refer it to the CEQ. After the 25-day period, the EPA can only refer the EIS for review if the NRC concurs, which is not likely at this point.

The EPA has defended its actions, saying that officials were unable to challenge the EIS due to lack of guidance from the White House on including environmental justice in the EIS process. According to one EPA source quoted in *Inside EPA*, the White House has not dictated what should merit a review by the CEQ in such a situation. "We don't have a standard to do that," the source said, noting that "there is no guidance out there yet."

EPA Region VI and NRC officials met in November to further discuss the issue. "The NRC wanted to sit down and talk about the comments we made," said Yvonne Vallette, a life scientist in the environmental services division of the Region VI EPA. "They weren't sure how to handle environmental justice."

Following the meeting, the EPA hoped that the NRC would create a supplemental document to the final EIS providing further information on environmental justice, but the NRC sent a letter to the EPA in December declining the EPA's advice. "NRC basically said thanks, but no

thanks," Vallette said.

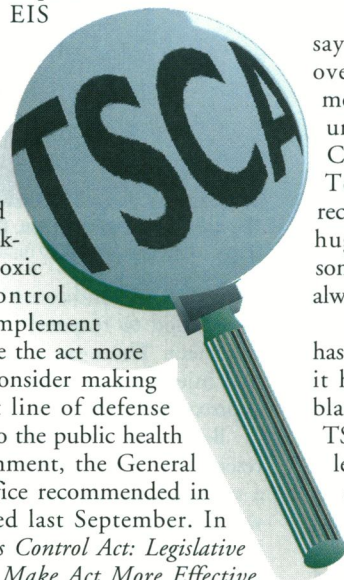
Vallette said that this situation was unusual because the executive order was issued after the draft EIS was reviewed, and the EPA is not supposed to raise new issues on a final draft.

The NRC will hold a licensing review on March 15, which the EPA will monitor. "We'll be looking at how safety and environmental justice issues will be made available to the public," Vallette said.

Meanwhile, EPA officials are meeting with the CEQ to develop guidelines on incorporating environmental justice concerns into federal documents, which will increase public participation in the EIS process.

GAO Takes a Close Look at

Congress should address the weaknesses of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), implement changes to make the act more effective, and consider making TSCA the first line of defense against threats to the public health and the environment, the General Accounting Office recommended in a report released last September. In *Toxic Substances Control Act: Legislative Changes Could Make Act More Effective*, the GAO urged Congress to "strengthen the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to regulate chemicals by allowing TSCA to be used in preference to other environmental laws, where appropriate, and to establish a framework for taking action that is less burdensome for the EPA."



opening paragraphs should have read:

In late March and early April of 1993, a surge of cryptosporidia, a disease-causing parasite, swept through water-treatment filters in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. An estimated 400,000 people became sick from drinking contaminated water, with varying degrees of illness including diarrhea, abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, and fever. Eighty-two AIDS patients died in the wake of the outbreak, according to the City of Milwaukee and the Milwaukee AIDS Project.

The problem of microbial contamination of drinking water is an ancient

Congress enacted TSCA in October 1976 to address the risks posed by existing chemicals and to provide safeguards against the introduction of additional contaminants. But of the 72,000 substances in EPA's inventory of TSCA chemicals, the agency has issued controls for only nine substances under the act.

Spokespersons for industry and the environmental community have different opinions of the GAO report. "We are still evaluating the report's recommendations, but we are not encouraged by them," explained Charles Walton of the Chemical Manufacturers Association (CMA). "The CMA believes it has many inaccuracies."

Environmentalists, on the other hand, say the report and its findings are long overdue. "The EPA is not going to be more aggressive in implementing TSCA unless prodded by Congress," said Pat Costner, a spokesperson for Greenpeace's Toxic Waste Campaign. "The EPA's record on TSCA is dismal. There is such a huge backlog of chemicals that unless something formidable is done, the EPA is always going to have to play catchup."

While the report noted that the EPA has regulated few chemicals under TSCA, it highlighted two factors as largely to blame for the EPA's poor performance: TSCA's requirement that the EPA use the least burdensome regulation to control substances, which has restricted the EPA from using its authority, and the EPA's tendency to interpret TSCA as giving preference to dealing with chemical risks under other laws.

The EPA acknowledges that TSCA's usefulness has been limited and agrees that Congress should move to strengthen the EPA's ability to control harmful chemicals. "We generally agree with the report's findings, although the agency believes it has been more productive than the GAO says

one, and even through the 1920s and '30s, typhoid fever and amoebic dysentery killed hundreds of Americans when they drank polluted municipal water. Starting with Jersey City in 1908, though, U.S. municipalities began treating drinking water with chlorine to reduce health risks from dangerous microorganisms. By 1945, the use of disinfectants, along with improved filtration and sewage treatment, made dramatic improvements in water quality. Thus, for many years the benefits of using chlorine to disinfect water supplies were virtually undisputed. Today 98% of U.S. drinking water is still purified by chlorine.

Errata

The table entitled "Sound Levels and Human Response" on page 925 of the November 1994 issue (102:11) in the article "Environmental Impact on Hearing: Is Anyone Listening?" was mistakenly published as original. We regret that we did not credit the July 1994 issue of *Health & Environment Digest* as the source of the edited table.

The first paragraph of the Focus article "What's in the Water: The Disinfectant Dilemma" on page 30 of the January 1995 issue (103:1) was accidentally deleted and replaced by the first paragraph of the preceding article. The